773 Yeramalindji (Yalmanindji), a blackened mass, still in its original
796 shape, lying in the Nanggoru.
171 One special feature of this "Mother Place" was that on each of the
walls of both the Kanalina (the oval billabong) and the Nanggoru
[532] (the semi-circular trench or "river"), the rainbow serpent, here
called Muit, was engraved. Apart from what informants said, there
[346] was no mistaking the drawing. The walls were of hard clay and about
2 feet and a little more in depth.

Finally, the "Mother" ritual has spread north from the Lower Victoria River as far as Port Keats, where in 1944 the elders were assimilating the doctrine of the "Old Woman" (exoterically), but the desirable mother (esoterically), and the bullroarer with snake symbolism.*

The Appeal of the Kunapipi

771 A cult which spreads throughout a vast region as indicated in the
796 above outline, and spreads irresistibly, must satisfy a spiritual or psychological need and make a captivating appeal. There is no mistaking the grip which the doctrine of the "Mother" and the Snake has on the initiated, or their fervour and faith. But, why does the cult appeal and grip in this way?

Let us outline its significant features. It highlights the maternal, nourishing, reproductive, and indeed creative, principle in nature and man, though not denying the male principle. That is, it associates the cycle of the tropical seasons, and the increase of human beings and of natural species with the concept of Mother—of birth from the womb. Further, it correlates this with sexual activity in which the male or
[831] inseminating principle is involved. In the former aspect, we have the Mother, symbolized by the ceremonial "Mother Place", and in particular by the earth womb, the *nanggoru*, for, indeed, she is the earth. In the latter case we see the symbolism of the Great Snake: the Rainbow Snake, and the Yermalindji.

796 Further, in the ritual, the male actors simulate sex intercourse,
786 which symbolizes both the impregnation or else the quickening of the Mother herself, and also the intercourse of the animals represented in the rite. It is done for her and through her for them and all nature. Finally, the actual sexual intercourse between the actors and selected women near the ceremonial ground, as part of the total ritual, not only witnesses to the indispensable rôle of women in reproduction, but also makes the "Mother's" life-producing principle or power operative. Just as in arid Australia, the actors cause blood from their arm vein or genital organ to flow on to the symbolic representation of the totem or totemic ancestor, giving it or
[789] him power to increase its kind; so too in Arnhem Land the actors'

* Mr. F. Parkes, a member of the Air Force, gained the confidence of these men, and recorded all he could.

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773 796 203 Dreaming Period. When they first leave their home camp they are painted with red-ochre and arm-blood, which represent the blood of the Wauwalak. That is, for the purpose of the ritual they become the Two Sisters, and are swallowed by Julunggul; and on their emergence from the ritual, they are revivified just as were the women. On their returning home, they are again smeared with red-ochre and arm blood before entering the sacred Kunapipi ground.

773 796 776 In all the rituals we find the main theme of the Wauwalak's adventure with Julunggul; but subsidiary Pythons are present, and tend to confuse this aspect of the doctrine. There are Lu'ningu, the Julunggul herself (either alone, or with her husband playing an active or inactive part), and the group of young snakes who watched the actual swallowing of the Wauwalak. Another python, an unmarried male, is associated with Gru:awona, where he still lives in his spirit form. He threw up a great amount of earth and formed a hill; then he dug up more earth, and formed another hill with a high bank at one side. Under this bank he lives, beside the deep pool; here the water is continually swirling, and its surface is the colour of the rainbow. Close by, at Muruwul, it is said, is a rainbow reaching up into the sky: that is Julunggul "twisting up" to catch the Wauwalak. It was here, at Muruwul, that man first "took part for that Snake" (see myth above); "for that Snake got to be Dreaming *mareiin* for us, because he swallowed the Wauwalak. Now we make that Wauwalak [778] *murlk* on our sacred ground, in just the same way as it was first made at Muruwul. In it we place the long wooden *julunggul* 'trumpet', all painted and decorated in totemic designs, for the *djunggawon*, or the *uwar* log 'drum' for the *ngu:rlmak*. And instead of Julunggul swallowing the Wauwalak, it swallows the young boys we send out to the rituals".

In the Kunapipi the two long *jelmalandji* emblems are erected, but they cannot "talk"; "we have to make sound for them, so we twirl a bullroarer". This is called, in translation, the "shout side", because, informants explain, "those two *jelmalandji* couldn't speak, and we have to make own language for them". Orthodox versions stress that the *jelmalandji* are the two Snakes, the male and female Julunggul,[3] standing up looking about after having swallowed the Wauwalak and the child, and talking to other Pythons on the Wessels and elsewhere.

773 778 796 346 The *murlk* or hut, also called *bambu:la* (a very sacred term), is not used to any extent in the Kunapipi, but it is present in both the *djunggawon* and the *ngu:rlmak*. As well as being the hut in which the

3. In central-western Northern Territory these *jelmalandji* are said to represent both the Fertility Mother and the Rainbow Snake (a superimposition of the snake on the Mother); at Birrundudu, the *jelmalandji* had pearl-shell eyes, and other decorations. And in some versions (see later) one *jelmalandji* is the Snake, and the other the "cabbage" palm growing at Muruwul (the latter serves to symbolize the Julunggul).

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Wauwalak sheltered, and into which the Julunggul came, the *murlk* symbolizes the uterus of the Mother (the Wauwalak or Djanggawul). Old aborigines say: "You know, when the Julunggul went into the hut, we mean that a penis is entering a woman's vagina, and this hut is a uterus too: that is why we have it on the sacred ground, for it reminds us that everything must come from the Mother's uterus. That is how we came in the Dreaming; and people still continue to come in that way, don't they? And why do we have that Julunggul? Well, don't we have to have a penis to open up and inseminate the woman, so that she can give birth to children? And when the Julunggul swallows the Wauwalak, that is like a penis being swallowed by a vagina, only we put it the other way around. Now, when we hold our big rituals, we do the very same things, because we want the seasons to come, and things to grow, and people to be born: that is the real meaning of what we do".

The Kunapipi rituals have been described in some detail by Dr. Warner (*op. cit.* pp. 290–311), and the reader is referred to this for comparisons. We will mention only various features found in the Yirrkalla region, indicating their relation to the Wauwalak mythology, and interpreting (from native explanations) the actions of the neophytes. It is beyond the scope of this work to record minute details of each stage of the ceremony, for this would entail description of dancing and many irrelevant actions, individual interpretations, and the whole interaction of men and women in and away from the sacred ground. Some of the Kunapipi songs, used both on the sacred ground and in the main camp, are given in Chapters VII and VIII, and these reveal certain details not treated here.

* * * *

The Kunapipi is held usually in the dry season, when food is plentiful; for during this ceremony people are reaping the benefits of performances held in the previous year, and at the same time are preparing for the coming wet season and the subsequent growth of food. Ceremonies may extend over a period of two weeks to two months, and in unusual cases as long as two years. But now, when the Mission frowns on the Kunapipi and its attendant rituals, it may be brought to a close after a few days with the result that much of the intricate symbolism is omitted. The principal Kunapipi leader is usually a man of the Li:alauwermiri or an affiliated linguistic group, or one whose totemic *rangga*, *mureiin* objects, or song cycle are associated with Muruwul sacred well and the Wauwalak. In the Yirrkalla region the Kunapipi leaders may have come from Rose River, being members of groups which are in other respects culturally alien, or from *dua* clans near Rose River who have obtained the Kunapipi from further south.

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[Facing p. 64] PLATE VI
[For caption see category 116, p. xi]